Equity in Telecom PSUs

5355. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Department of Telecom Services (DTS) is strongly resisting the Department's disinvestment move to bring down Government's equity in telecom public sector undertakings; and

(b) if so, the salient features thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) Government equity in both VSNL and MTNL has already been brought down to 53% and 56.25% respectively. The question of further disinvestment is being examined in consultation with concerned Departments.

Regularising of ED Employees

5356. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Minister of Communications had informed the public through a Press Conference held on 4th April, 2000 that the Ministry is in favour of regularising the Extra Departmental Employees under Department of Posts;

(b) if so, the details, if any, in the way of this view being translated into a formal Government decision;

(c) the impediments, if any, in the way of this view being translated into a formal Government decision;

(d) if so, the measures to overcome them; and

(e) if not, the tentative time schedule for implementing this decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (e) The Minister of Communications had mentioned in a press conference held on 4th April, 2000 about the terms and conditions of engagement for ED employees in general, and also the demands made by Staff Unions about the grant of status of regular employees and pension of ED Agent. All aspects of Extra Departmental System providing postal facilities in the rural areas of the country were also discussed in the recent meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Communications.

The issue regarding the ED Agents involve basic principles relating to the terms and conditions of employment under the Central Government, and hence these call for extensive examination in depth, and in consultation with other nodal Departments/Ministries of the Government of India.

In this context, the efforts of the Department of Posts to modernise the services with new technology and generate more revenue through premier services and products specifically tailored to meet the requirements of commercial/business sector are also relevant.

Seizure of bank guarantee of Cell Operators

5357. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have seized bank guarantees of cell operators; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) As and when the circumstances so warrant, the Government takes action to record its lien on, or to encash the Bank Guarantees furnished by the service providers in terms of the license agreements. A lien was accordingly recorded recently in respect of a few bank guarantees of some cellular operators to secure the interest of the Government vis- a-vis the outstanding wireless dues and future payments of license fee as revenue share.

Purchase of Hindi Typewriters

†5358. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of Departments under the Ministry which don't have a single Hindi typewriter so far;

(b) the reasons for not purchasing the Hindi typewriter so far and the officers responsible for such kind of neglignece; and

(c) the action taken to ensure the compliance of targets fixed for the purchase of Hindi typewriter by the Department of Official Language in its annual Hindi programme?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.